

## WIC Advisory Council Update

# Maryland WIC

## Better Nutrition Brighter Future

AUGUST 2016

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

***August is  
Breastfeeding  
Month! Visit our  
webpage at  
[www.mdwic.org](http://www.mdwic.org)  
to see the  
Governor's  
Breastfeeding  
Month  
Proclamation!***

***For reauthorization  
updates, visit  
[www.nwica.org](http://www.nwica.org)***

***MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR! Next  
Meeting, October  
25 at the WIC  
Training Center.***

### eWIC

The eWIC project is full speed ahead! We have already completed testing on the first release of software from our processor, Solutran. This testing verified that the processor's system can communicate with our MIS, WIC on the Web (WOW). Our workgroups are cranking out materials for training staff, vendors and participants and we have chosen the design for the MD eWIC card (see below)--and those are just the visible tasks that staff members from the State and Local Agencies have been working on.

Behind the scenes, the Nutrition, Vendor and IT Units have joined forces to create the enormous database known as the Approved Products List, aka the APL. To create the list, staff is scanning, or obtaining from manufacturers, every UPC (Universal Product Code--the long number under the vertical bars on almost everything we buy) and PLU (Product Look Up--used for produce) of every possible food by every manufacturer in every authorized WIC store across Maryland that a participant can purchase using their eWIC card. The products are loaded into a database and the ingredients and nutrients are reviewed by the nutrition staff and ultimately either rejected or approved for inclusion in our master APL. To date, we have collected over 2300 UPCs and 9000 PLUs! Once completed, this APL will be the database that will be used to "electronically decide" if a food is OK to purchase by a WIC participant. In the current, paper-based food instrument system, it is the cashier who makes the sometimes difficult decision of what is allowed or not. eWIC will eliminate this task at the checkout and make the process much smoother for both the participant and the store clerk. The APL will be continuously updated with new UPCs and PLUs of additional foods that meet our criteria or current foods whose UPC has changed due to a change in packaging or ingredients.

The Maryland eWIC Card is a magstripe card that will be swiped by the participant and will work similarly to a debit card. Staff from the state WIC Office, local agencies and participants from our first pilot area (Southern Maryland) selected the final design for the eWIC card.



## WIC Advisory Council on the WIC Website!

You can view the minutes of Advisory Council meetings as well as this and future Updates on the WIC Advisory Council page of the WIC website at: [www.mdwic.org](http://www.mdwic.org)

Maryland WIC Program

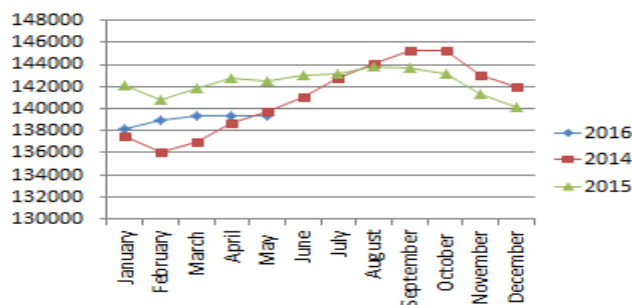
201 W. Preston Street  
Baltimore, MD

1-800-242-4WIC  
[mdwic.org](http://mdwic.org)

## Participation

While our numbers remain relatively flat, we are working hard to maintain and add to our caseload. Several counties are now advertising in shopping malls, and buses and trains continue to be great venues for spreading the word. Keep your ears and eyes open for radio and movie theater ads that are playing throughout the state.

Maryland WIC Participation Trends



## Child Nutrition Reauthorization

Both the House and Senate 2016 versions of reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act have been drafted. For information on the provision of both the House and Senate versions and the implications for WIC, visit:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/aws.upl/nwica.org/cnr-house-and-senate-bill-comparison-for-wic.pdf>

## WIC Foods List gets a Face Lift!

The WIC Foods List is used by participants as a reference when learning about the foods they can purchase, and while they are shopping. Based on interviews with staff and participants, the foods list is getting an overhaul to include some changes in foods allowed and arranged in an easier to use format. The new foods list will be distributed to participants starting in September.

